

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant responds herein to the Final Office Action of December 10, 2007. Claims 13-16 were rejected in the Office Action. Applicant amends Claim 13 and respectfully requests a reconsideration of the rejection. Claims 13-16 are pending in the Application after the present Amendment.

Drawings

Summary page of the Final Office Action indicates that the drawings filed on April 6, 2007 are objected to by the Examiner. Applicant believes that this is a typographical error because the drawings of April 6, 2007 were corrected in replacement drawings filed on September 21, 2007. Formal acceptance of the drawings filed on September 21, 2007 is respectfully requested.

Response to Claim Rejections

Claims 13-16 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,421,905) in view of McConnell (U.S. Patent No. 4,984,597) and Kuroda et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0153098).

Claim 13, as amended, recites that the heating device preheats the back plate in a position above the treating tank. This preheating is conducted before the substrate holding device receives the substrates from the substrate transport mechanism, and before the substrate holding device is lowered to immerse the received substrates into the heated treating solution stored in the treating tank.

The Examiner agreed in the Office Action that Ueno does not teach “the back plate having a heating device where the heating device pre-heats the black plate before immersing the substrate in the treating solution.” See, Office Action, page 3, second paragraph. However, the Examiner believes that McConnell teaches such heating device. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

McConnell states in col. 7, lines 20-28:

“Preferably, the last cycle of rinsing with ultra pure water is with hot water (e.g., 65-85 degrees centigrade) in order to heat the wafers to approximately the boiling point of the isopropanol (82 degrees centigrade). Alternatively, the wafers 16 may be heated by direct solid heat transfer through wafer carriers 18, 20 by means of heating bands or other heating devices applied to the carriers.”

Thus, McConnell discloses only heating devices heating the wafers. The reference does not disclose or even suggest a heating device which preheats a back plate in a position above a treating tank, as required by the amended Claim 13. Moreover, the reference does not teach or even suggest preheating the black plate before a substrate holding device receives substrates from a substrate transport mechanism, and before this substrate holding device is lowered to immerse the received substrates into the heated treating solution stored in the treating tank, as also required by the amended Claim 13. Accordingly, these limitations of Claim 13 are not disclosed in McConnell. Further, none of the other cited references remedy this deficiency of McConnell. Finally, the prior art of record lacks any motivation or suggestion to use the wafer heating devices of McConnell in a manner suggested by the Examiner, i.e., to pre-heat the black plate of Ueno. Accordingly, Claim 13 is allowable over the cited prior art.

Claims 14-16 depend from Claim 13. Therefore, Claims 14-16 are allowable at least for the same reason as Claim 13 and, further, on their own merits.

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Respectfully submitted,



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